



TRAVELLING TO INDIA FROM MALAYSIA

PASSPORT AND VISA

Visitors from most countries to India require a valid visa to enter the country. All travelers to India must possess a passport that is valid for at least six months beyond the date of intended departure from India.

Malaysian business visitors to India need a valid Indian business visa to attend meetings, to establish joint ventures and to invest in the country.

The High Commission of India based in Kuala Lumpur issues visas to those foreign nationals desiring to travel to India. As per the current practice, tourist visa is issued with 6-month validity with a provision for multiple entry.

Business visa up to one year or more validity is issued for businessmen. A letter from the inviting authorities in India and letter from the local sponsoring company need to be enclosed.

Employment visa is required by those who wish to undertake employment in India. A letter of employment, contractual terms and copy of the registration of the company are required to be produced while applying for employment visa. It may be noted that applications for employment visas are considered only for managerial/highly skilled jobs.

Transit visa is restricted to maximum of 72 hours (onward journey ticket to be produced).

With effect from 1 August 2007, High Commission of India has outsourced visa applications. Accordingly visa applications should be submitted at any one of the three India Visa Centres approved by the High Commission, except those seeking gratis visas on official and diplomatic passports for which passports have to be submitted at the High Commission.



Banking

Besides the Indian banks, several international banks including Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation operate in major metros. Most have 24-hour ATMs. Money transfers through these banks are also easy. The usual banking hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on weekdays and 10 a.m. to 12 noon on Saturdays.

Newspapers and Magazines

English language dailies are in circulation in Metros and major cities. In addition, regional newspapers as well cover local news in great detail. Some newspapers such as Economic Times are specific to industry and business clientele. Most newspapers are on sale at newsstands and news clippings are available on their web sites. National as well as well-known international magazines such as the Business Week, Newsweek, and Time are available in all Metros.

Useful web links:

www.samachar.com;





Please visit the website of High Commission of India [www.indianhighcommission.com.my] and India Visa Centre [www.indiavisa.com.my] for more details on procedure for obtaining visa and documentation required. Visa application forms are available online at the above mentioned High Commission website.

At present there are three India Visa Centres located at Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Johor Bahru.

India Visa Centres [www.indiavisa.com.my]:

(i) Kuala Lumpur:

Grandlotus India Visa Centre Sdn. Bhd.
G-01, Straits Trading Building, No.2,
Lebuh Pasar Besar,
50050 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: 03-2692 2692; Fax: 03-2698 2692
Email: kl@indiavisa.com.my

(ii) Penang:

No. 105, Lebuh Chulia, 10200 Penang
Tel: 04 - 2505 000

(iii) Johor Bahru:

Suite 325, 3rd Floor, Pan Global Plaza,
Jalan Wong Ah Fook, 80000 Johor Bharu
Tel: 07- 2223 325

Directions for reaching the High Commission of India and India Visa Centres can be accessed on the website of the High Commission [www.indianhighcommission.com.my].

Visa for PIOs

Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) can apply for a PIO card at the High Commission of India. PIO card, which has a 15-year validity, gives them the freedom to visit India without a visa during the period of its validity.



AIRPORTS OF ENTRY

Business travelers can enter India through any of the five major cities with regular International Airports - New Delhi, the capital, in the north; Mumbai (formerly Bombay), the commercial capital on the coast of the Arabian Sea in the west, Chennai (formerly Madras) on the southern coast of the Indian Ocean, Kolkata (formerly Calcutta) in the east, and Thiruvananthapuram in the South-West.

In addition to the International Airports, there are also several domestic airports in India with limited international operations. These have customs and immigration facilities for limited international operations by national carriers and for foreign tourist and cargo charter flights. These include Bangalore, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Calicut, Goa, Varanasi, Patna, Agra, Jaipur, Amritsar, Tiruchirapally, Coimbatore and Lucknow.

Visit the website of Airports Authority of India [www.airportsindia.org.in] for obtaining more information on the various types of airports in India.

Flights from Kuala Lumpur to New Delhi take about 5 ½ hours and to Chennai about 3 ½ hours. Indian Airlines/Air India, Jet Airways, Malaysian Airways and Air Asia operate flights from Kuala Lumpur to various destinations in India.

CURRENCY DECLARATION, CUSTOMS AND BAGGAGE RULES

Currency Declaration

The unit of the Indian currency is the Rupee.

Travellers can bring into India any amount of foreign exchange, subject to the condition that on arrival a declaration is made to the custom authorities in a Currency Declaration Form. It is necessary to fill out a declaration form if the foreign exchange exceeds US\$ 10,000 or its equivalent and /or the aggregate value of foreign currency notes is US\$ 5,000 or its equivalent.





Traveller cheques in US Dollar and Pound sterling are easily exchangeable and ATMs are available in major Indian cities. Credit cards are accepted in hotels and large stores.

Customs and Baggage Rules

There are two channels for customs clearance:-

- (i) Green Channel for passengers not having any dutiable goods;
- (ii) Red Channel for passengers having dutiable goods.

Passengers walking through the Green Channel with dutiable / prohibited goods are liable to prosecution/penalty and confiscation of goods.

Details of articles allowed free of duty for visitors to India are provided at the website www.cbec.gov.in

The transfer of residence scheme applies to foreign nationals visiting India for long durations. Under this scheme, foreign nationals can import certain personal effects without paying customs duty. A bank guarantee has to be provided for this purpose, which is returnable after the individual has stayed in India for a year. To avail of this scheme, the goods have to be shipped within two months before the entry into India or one month after entry into India. The goods brought into India under the transfer of residence scheme have to be owned by the importer or his family for at least one year.

For more details, please visit the website www.cbec.gov.in

TRAVEL MAPS

Detailed and digitized maps helpful for travelling inside India are now available from the Internet. These also provide interactive facilities for obtaining more detailed information about specific locations by zooming inside the maps.

Visit Maptell website www.maptell.com or Maps of India website www.mapsofindia.com

INTER-STATE TRAVEL

Most parts of the country are well connected by air, rail, and road transport infrastructure. Indian Airlines, the government-owned airline, and a number of private airlines such as Jet Airways, Kingfisher, Jetlite, Kingfisher Red, IndiGo, SpiceJet, Go Air, Paramount Airways, etc., run scheduled flights to various destinations. Charter flights are offered by a few private companies.

For more details on Indian Airlines services, please visit www.indian-airlines.nic.in, www.jetairways.com, www.jetlite.com, www.airindia.com .

Railway reservations can be made from any of the 520 reservation centres in the country or at railway stations. For further details, please visit www.indianrail.gov.in .

TRAVEL AGENTS

India has a well established network of travel agents and tour operators. Most travel agents and tour operators are also members of reputed National and International Associations. The Government also has a system of providing recognition to them.

Travel Agents Association of India, TAAINET
www.travelagentsofindia.com.

HOTELS

Hotels in India are classified into different groups such as deluxe, international chains, heritage and palace hotels, tourist bungalows, traveller lodges, and rest houses.

Liberalization and a spurt in travel have brought a large number of international hotel chains to India. While well-known chains such as Sheraton, Holiday Inn, Hyatt, Inter-Continental, Le Meridien, Quality Inns, Best Western and Kempinski have been in the country for a while, the recent entrants are Country Hospitality with all its chains





(Regent, Radisson, Country Inns, TGIF), Marriott, Hilton, Park Plaza, Four Seasons and SHPC.

Centralized reservations may be obtained through the travel agents. For further information, please visit the following websites: www.hotels-india.com, www.india-hotels.net, www.fhrai.com.

FOOD

Indian cuisine differs from region to region. There is Mughlai food, Tandoor (barbeque in clay oven) and South Indian food. For people in the north, wheat is the staple, while it is rice in south India. Generally Indian food is spicy and hot. The waiters can be told to make it less spicy.

There are some Indians who are vegetarians. Hindus do not eat beef considering cow as sacred. Muslims do not eat pork. Some vegetarians also do not eat egg, onions, garlic etc. It is best to check dietary restrictions in advance while inviting Indians for a meal.

The trend towards dining out has increased and many restaurants serve Continental, Chinese, Thai, Spanish, French, Mexican, Italian, Lebanese, Mediterranean, and other cuisines. American fast food is very popular and outlets are present in most cities and towns.

Tipping is optional but a common practice in India. The usual option involves leaving a 10% tip for the services provided.



HEALTH FORMALITIES

For entry into India

Any person, Foreigner or Indian, (excluding infants below six months) arriving by air or sea without a vaccination certificate of yellow fever will be kept in quarantine isolation for a period up to 6 days if :

1. The person arrives in India within 6 days of departure from an infected area.
2. Has come on a ship which has started from or transited at any port in a yellow fever affected country within 30 days of its arrival in India provided such ship has not been disinfected in accordance with the procedure laid down by WHO.

For leaving India

There is no health check requirement by Indian Government on passengers leaving India.

Persons leaving for a yellow fever infected area are advised in their own interest to be in possession of valid yellow fever vaccination certificates before they leave the country.

